

BENTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

John M. Brown, Jr.
Chairman

Russell J. Anzalone
Secretary



Robbyn Tumey
Member

Kim Dennison
Election Coordinator

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MINUTES OF THE BENTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

December 13, 2012

Commission members present: John Brown, Jr., Robbyn Tumey, and Russell Anzalone

Others present: Kim Dennison, Sharon Rose, Pea Ridge Mayor Jackie Crabtree, Jerry J. Nichols, and Jim Bemis

Media: Tom Sissom, Benton County Daily Record

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. and welcomed everyone.

New Business:

A. Meeting with Mayor Jackie Crabtree of Pea Ridge and Jerry Nichols, Precinct #33 Sheriff:

Jerry Nichols and Mayor Jackie Crabtree stated that there were some issues at the General Election held on November 6, 2012 and offered the following suggestions: (1) adding an early voting site in Pea Ridge, at least for the major elections. Mr. Nichols and Mayor Crabtree stated that they feel that it would be helpful to make early voting available to the communities in the Pea Ridge, Garfield, Gateway, and the northeastern parts of the county. Mayor Crabtree stated that the City Council meeting room in the Pea Ridge City Hall, located at 227 A East Pickens, could be used for early voting. Chairman Brown had concerns that the City Council meeting room may not be an adequate area or that it would interrupt the daily operations of City Hall. Mayor Crabtree stated that the council room is available during the day and occasionally the planning commission will meet in an afternoon. Commissioner Anzalone stated that he had talked with Sandy Womack the Administrator for Autumn Place Assisted Living and she stated that she would entertain the idea of having this facility as an early voting or voting location. Mr. Nichols stated that the high school has offered the tornado shelter as a voting site. Chairman Brown stated that he has concerns with using the school location because of the traffic and parking issues when students are present. Jerry Nichols suggested moving the voting location from the Pea Ridge Emergency Services Building to the Family Life Center, First Baptist Church of Pea Ridge to remedy some of the election problems. Mr. Nichols added that this location would provide more parking, provide easier access, and allow an efficient routing of the voters. Mr. Nichols stated that the church facility is located on Hwy 72/Hwy 94 intersections at the Pea Ridge town center. He stated that the church has approved designating the Family Life Center as the polling place for Precinct 33, if the proposal meets the approval of the Election Commission. Mr. Nichols stressed the need for supplying adequate voting machines and paper ballots. He stated that for the November 6, 2012 General Election, voters waited several hours to cast their vote.

Chairman Brown stated that the Election Commission has 261 Ivotronic Machines and that fifty-five (55) of those were used at the six (6) early voting locations. He explained that state law requires that the early voting machines be canvassed and secured until after the election and that is why Pea Ridge did not receive additional machines. Commissioner Tumey reported that in the Pea Ridge precinct there were 711 early votes cast and that the average cost for an early voting location is approximately \$4,500 per week. Commissioner Tumey added that there would have to be a large, highly concentrated area to justify this type of investment. Mr. Nichols asked if an early voting location in the Pea Ridge area would be for every election or just the presidential election. Chairman Brown stated that it is the commission's option to establish additional early voting sites aside from the county clerk offices, and it is controlled per election. Commissioner Tumey stated that the Ivotronic machines are no longer being made and if any are purchased, they are refurbished machines, and since 2006, the Quorum Court has given the election commission fifty (50) new machines and some netbooks.

Chairman Brown stated that he is leaning toward more paper ballots and that he is interested in an M-100 Precinct Counter from Election Systems & Software (ES&S) which is a precinct based ballot counter and vote tabulator that list for approximately \$5,000 per unit. In addition to the cost of each M-100, there is a maintenance contract of \$225 per machine each year.

Chairman Brown thanked Mayor Crabtree and Jerry Nichols for presenting their concerns and stated that he will look into using the Family Life Center, First Baptist Church of Pea Ridge as a polling site. Mr. Nichols presented pictures of the Family Life Center, First Baptist Church of Pea Ridge showing the location, dimensions and square footage, the available parking, and the handicap accessible entrances and exits. Kim Dennison asked who they should contact. Mr. Nichols stated, Pastor Al Fowler. Chairman Brown stated that he and Commissioners Anzalone and Tumey will consider their suggestions on moving the polling location from the Pea Ridge Emergency Services Building to the Family Life Center, First Baptist Church of Pea Ridge, and establishing an early voting site in the Pea Ridge area. Mayor Crabtree asked the commission if anyone had been looking into other electronic sources such as emails or I-Pads. Commissioner Tumey stated that she had been doing research on the voting process in the country and many states are not using machines but going back to paper. Commissioner Tumey stated that the commission is under the agreement that as long as the Ivotronic Machines are working they will continue to use them.

Mayor Crabtree asked how the commission determines the number of paper ballots for a precinct. Chairman Brown replied that on major elections approximately 50% of total voters are calculated for paper ballots. Commissioner Tumey stated that in the November 6, 2012 election, Precinct 33 had 3,290 voters of which 59% voted. Commissioner Tumey stated that probably 1,600 would have been ordered. Chairman Brown stated that if additional Ivotronics are purchased, they would be refurbished at a cost of \$2,000 each plus freight.

- B. Order of Destruction for the Bentonville Special School Election, April 13, 2010; Preferential Primary Election, May 18, 2010; Preferential Primary Run-Off Election, June 8, 2010; and Siloam Springs Primary Election, August 8, 2010: Chairman Brown made a motion to sign the Order of Destruction, seconded by Commissioner Anzalone.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Old Business:

Commissioner Tumey asked Kim if she has received a response from ES&S on the issues with the paper ballots. Kim responded that ES&S continues to say that the problem was with the ballots that were printed on the BOD. Commissioner Tumey stated that she wants ES&S to give the commission a written explanation and to be accountable. Commissioner Tumey stated that an individual on the State Board of Commissioners told her that another county in Arkansas had issues and that ES&S admitted that they had out sourced their printing and that the ink was the problem. Commissioner Tumey stated that makes sense because of the timing and she feels that ES&S should give the Election Commission an explanation in writing.

Public Comment:

None

Announcements:

Kim reported that she is working on the billings for the Annual School Election and the School Run-Off Election and that those bills will be ready for approval at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Chairman Brown made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Anzalone. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell J. Anzalone, Secretary
Prepared by Sharon Rose
Benton County Election Commission